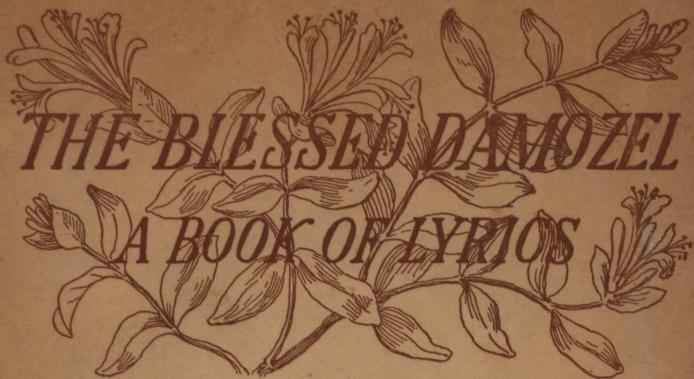
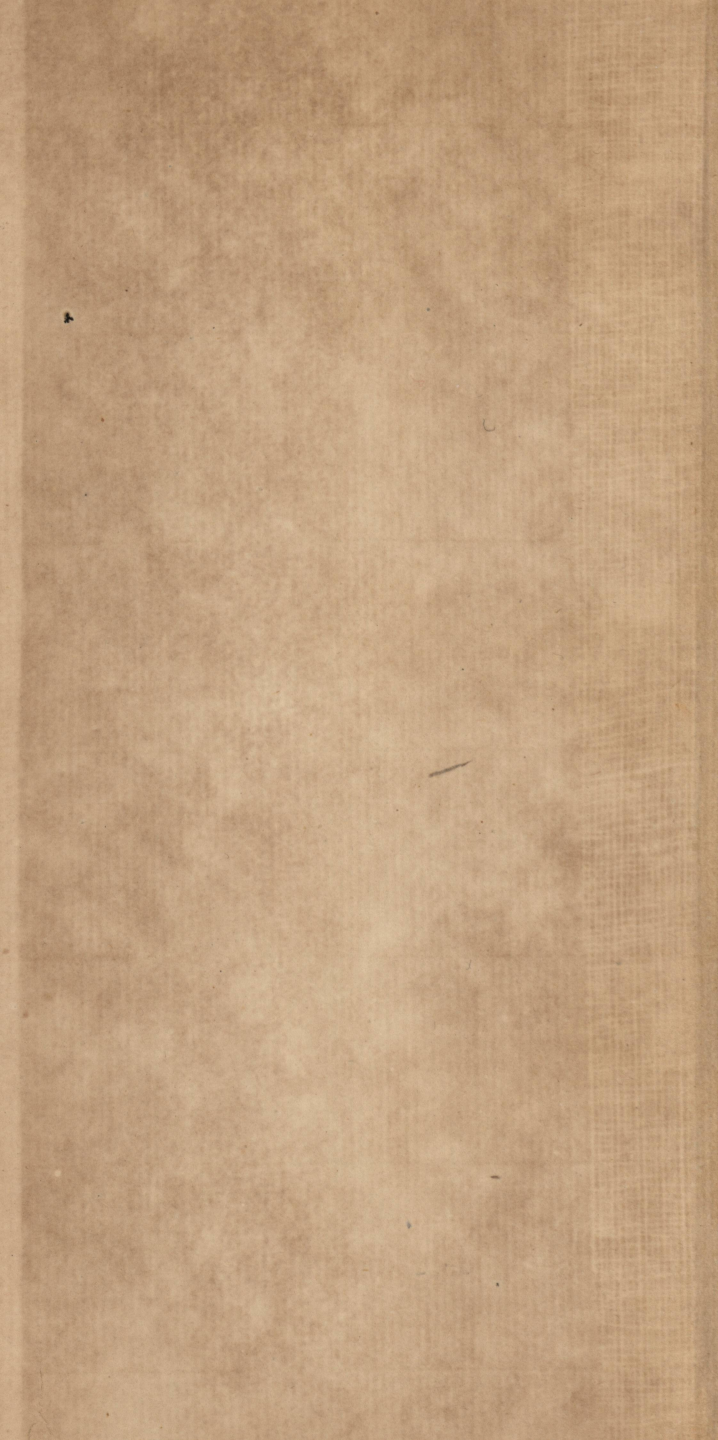








Alice Herbert. a2



The Bibelot Series.



THE BLESSED DAMOZEL:

A BOOK OF LYRICS.



**W**ATER, for anguish of the solstice :—nay,  
But dip the vessel slowly,—nay, but lean  
And hark how at its verge the wave sighs in  
Reluctant. Hush! Beyond all depth away  
The heat lies silent at the brink of day :  
Now the hand trails upon the viol-string  
That sobs, and the brown faces cease to sing,  
Sad with the whole of pleasure. Whither stray  
Her eyes now, from whose mouth the slim pipes creep  
And leave it pouting, while the shadowed grass  
Is cool against her naked side? Let be :—  
Say nothing now unto her lest she weep,  
Nor name this ever. Be it as it was,—  
Life touching lips with Immortality.

FOR A VENETIAN PASTORAL.

(By Giorgione.)

# THE BLESSED DA- MOZEL

*A Book of Lyrics Chosen from  
the works of*

*Dante Gabriel Rossetti.*

*Printed for Thomas B. Mosher  
and Published by him at  
37 Exchange Street, Portland,  
Maine. Mccccxcv.*

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*This Edition is limited to 725 copies.*



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*From "An Italian Garden" by A. Mary  
F. Robinson (London, 1886.)*

IN MEMORIAM.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

(A CANZONE.)

O BORN in May and dead at Eastertide,  
O mournful nightingale  
That sang as solemn in our English vale  
As any in the Italian country side.  
Now comes the spring again,  
When listeners hush and every songster sings;  
The swallows sweep with darting wings  
At last and larks arise,  
For spring is here and only waits in vain  
One sweeter note for which we all are fain  
That sounds in Paradise.

Yea, thou art dead, nor hast thou any care  
That the first hawthorne swells in bud to-night,  
Nor yet for our despair;  
Nor for the songs that once were thy delight,  
Whose singing wings shall never cease to beat  
In music strange and sweet,  
And make a southern April in our air.  
But thou art gone before  
To that remote, eternal, final shore  
That was thine unforbidden goal;  
And thou hast climbed the Mount of Paradise;  
And thy triumphant soul,  
With him who living went that way,  
And him who saw all Heaven with blinded eyes  
Rejoices in the day!



Rejoice at last, O souls,  
That never were on earth completely glad  
For the full vision that ye had  
Of everlasting things;  
Now sing within your shining aureoles  
And strike the golden strings  
Of an eternal lyre!  
Thou, too, O latest comer in the Quire,  
Whom most I praise with him  
Thy master, and our milder English seer.  
Lift up thy music clear;  
For never didst thou find the vision dim,  
Or long to linger here  
Among the roses and the summer green,  
But, knowing not a wavering in desire  
With unrelenting wings  
Thou fleddest past us towards eternal things  
As swallows fly to summers never seen.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL:

A BOOK OF LYRICS.





## THE BLESSED DAMOZEL.

**T**HE blessed damozel leaned out  
From the gold bar of Heaven;  
Her eyes were deeper than the depth  
Of waters stilled at even;  
She had three lilies in her hand,  
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,  
No wrought flowers did adorn,  
But a white rose of Mary's gift,  
For service meetly worn;  
Her hair that lay along her back  
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day  
One of God's choristers;  
The wonder was not yet quite gone  
From that still look of hers;  
Albeit, to them she left, her day  
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.  
. . . Yet now, and in this place,  
Surely she leaned o'er me — her hair  
Fell all about my face. . . .  
Nothing: the autumn-fall of leaves.  
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house  
That she was standing on;

*By God built over the sheer depth  
The which is Space begun;  
So high, that looking downward thence  
She scarce could see the sun.*

*It lies in Heaven, across the flood  
Of ether, as a bridge.  
Beneath, the tides of day and night  
With flame and darkness ridge  
The void, as low as where this earth  
Spins like a fretful midge.*

*Around her, lovers, newly met  
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,  
Spoke evermore among themselves  
Their heart-remembered names;  
And the souls mounting up to God  
Went by her like thin flames.*

*And still she bowed herself and stooped  
Out of the circling charm;  
Until her bosom must have made  
The bar she leaned on warm,  
And the lilies lay as if asleep  
Along her bended arm.*

*From the fixed place of Heaven she saw  
Time like a pulse shake fierce  
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove  
Within the gulf to pierce  
Its path; and now she spoke as when  
The stars sang in their spheres.*

*The sun was gone now; the curled moon  
Was like a little feather  
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now  
She spoke through the still weather.*

*Her voice was like the voice the stars  
Had when they sang together.*

*(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,  
Strove not her accents there,  
Fain to be hearkened? When those bells  
Possessed the mid-day air,  
Strove not her steps to reach my side  
Down all the echoing stair?)*

*"I wish that he were come to me,  
For he will come," she said.  
"Have I not prayed in Heaven? — on earth,  
Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?  
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?  
And shall I feel afraid?"*

*"When round his head the aureole clings,  
And he is clothed in white,  
I'll take his hand and go with him  
To the deep wells of light;  
As unto a stream we will step down,  
And bathe there in God's sight.*

*"We two will stand beside that shrine,  
Occult, withheld, untrod,  
Whose lamps are stirred continually  
With prayer sent up to God;  
And see our old prayers, granted, melt  
Each like a little cloud.*

*"We two will lie i' the shadow of  
That living mystic tree  
Within whose secret growth the Dove  
Is sometimes felt to be,  
While every leaf that His plumes touch  
Saith His Name audibly.*



*"And I myself will teach to him,  
I myself, lying so,  
The songs I sing here; which his voice  
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,  
And find some knowledge at each pause,  
Or some new thing to know."*

*(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!  
Yea, one wast thou with me  
That once of old. But shall God lift  
To endless unity  
The soul whose likeness with thy soul  
Was but its love for thee?)*

*"We two," she said, "will seek the groves  
Where the lady Mary is,  
With her five handmaidens, whose names  
Are five sweet symphonies,  
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,  
Margaret and Rosalys.*

*"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks  
And foreheads garlanded;  
Into the fine cloth white like flame  
Weaving the golden thread,  
To fashion the birth-ropes for them  
Who are just born, being dead.*

*"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:  
Then will I lay my cheek  
To his, and tell about our love,  
Not once abashed or weak:  
And the dear Mother will approve  
My pride, and let me speak.*

*"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,  
To Him round whom all souls*

*Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads  
Bowed with their aureoles :  
And angels meeting us shall sing  
To their citherns and citoles.*

*"There will I ask of Christ the Lord  
Thus much for him and me :—  
Only to live as once on earth  
With Love,—only to be,  
As then awhile, for ever now  
Together, I and he."*

*She gazed and listened and then said,  
Less sad of speech than mild,—  
"All this is when he comes." She ceased.  
The light thrilled towards her, fill'd  
With angels in strong level flight.  
Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.*

*(I saw her smile.) But soon their path  
Was vague in distant spheres :  
And then she cast her arms along  
The golden barriers,  
And laid her face between her hands,  
And wept. (I heard her tears.)*

read 127  
from Shelley

LOVE'S NOCTURN.

**M**ASTER of the murmuring courts  
Where the shapes of sleep convene!—  
Lo! my spirit here exhorts  
All the powers of thy demesne  
For their aid to woo my queen.  
What reports  
Yield thy jealous courts unseen?

Vaporous, unaccountable,  
Dreamworld lies forlorn of light,  
Hollow like a breathing shell.  
Ah! that from all dreams I might  
Choose one dream and guide its flight!  
I know well  
What her sleep should tell to-night.

There the dreams are multitudes:  
Some that will not wait for sleep,  
Deep within the August woods;  
Some that hum while rest may steep  
Weary labour laid a-heap;  
Interludes,  
Some, of grievous moods that weep.

Poets' fancies all are there:  
There the elf-girls flood with wings  
Valleys full of plaintive air;  
There breathe perfumes; there in rings  
Whirl the foam-bewildered springs;  
Siren there  
Winds her dizzy bair and sings.



Thence the one dream mutually  
Dreamed in bridal unison,  
Less than waking ecstasy;  
Half-formed visions that make moan  
In the house of birth alone;  
And what we  
At death's wicket see, unknown.

But for mine own sleep, it lies  
In one gracious form's control,  
Fair with honourable eyes,  
Lamps of a translucent soul:  
O their glance is loftiest dole,  
Sweet and wise,  
Wherein Love descries his goal.

Reft of her, my dreams are all  
Clammy trance that fears the sky:  
Changing footpaths shift and fall;  
From polluted coverts nigh,  
Miserable phantoms sigh;  
Quakes the pall,  
And the funeral goes by.

Master, is it soothly said  
That, as echoes of man's speech  
Far in secret clefts are made,  
So do all men's bodies reach  
Shadows o'er thy sunken beach,—  
Shape or shade  
In those halls pourtrayed of each?

Ab! might I, by thy good grace  
Groping in the windy stair,  
(Darkness and the breath of space  
Like loud waters everywhere,)  
Meeting mine own image there  
Face to face,  
Send it from that place to her!

Nay, not I; but oh! do thou,  
Master, from thy shadowkind  
Call my body's phantom now:  
Bid it bear its face declin'd  
Till its flight her slumbers find,  
And her brow  
Feel its presence bow like wind.

Where in groves the gracile Spring  
Trembles, with mute orison  
Confidently strengthening,  
Water's voice and wind's as one  
Shed an echo in the sun.  
Soft as Spring,  
Master, bid it sing and moan.

Song shall tell how glad and strong  
Is the night she soothes away;  
Moan shall grieve with that parched tongue  
Of the brazen hours of day:  
Sounds as of the springtide they,  
Moan and song,  
While the chill months long for May.

Not the prayers which with all leave  
The world's fluent woes prefer,—  
Not the praise the world doth give,  
Dulcet fulsome whisperer;—  
Let it yield my love to her,  
And achieve  
Strength that shall not grieve or err.

Wheresoe'er my dreams befall,  
Both at night-watch, (let it say,)  
And where round the sundial  
The reluctant hours of day,  
Heartless, hopeless of their way,  
Rest and call;—  
There her glance doth fall and stay.

*Suddenly her face is there :*

*So do mounting vapours wreath  
Subtle-scented transports where  
The black firwood sets its teeth.  
Part the boughs and look beneath,—  
Lilies share  
Secret waters there, and breathe.*

*Master, bid my shadow bend  
Whispering thus till birth of light,  
Lest new shapes that sleep may send  
Scatter all its work to flight;—  
Master, master of the night,  
Bid it spend  
Speech, song, prayer, and end aright.*

*Yet, ah me ! if at her head  
There another phantom lean  
Murmuring o'er the fragrant bed,—  
Ah ! and if my spirit's queen  
Smile those alien prayers between,—  
Ah ! poor shade !  
Shall it strive, or fade unseen ?*

*How should love's own messenger  
Strive with love and be love's foe ?  
Master, nay ! If thus, in her,  
Sleep a wedded heart should show,—  
Silent let mine image go,  
Its old share  
Of thy spell-bound air to know.*

*Like a vapour wan and mute,  
Like a flame, so let it pass ;  
One low sigh across her lute,  
One dull breath against her glass ;  
And to my sad soul, alas !  
One salute  
Cold as when death's foot shall pass.*



Then, too, let all hopes of mine,  
All vain hopes by night and day,  
Slowly at thy summoning sign  
Rise up pallid and obey.  
Dreams, if this is thus, were they :—  
Be they thine,  
And to dreamworld pine away.

Yet from old time, life, not death,  
Master, in thy rule is rife :  
Lo ! through thee, with mingling breath,  
Adam woke beside his wife.  
O Love bring me so, for strife,  
Force and faith,  
Bring me so not death but life !

Yea, to Love himself is pour'd  
This frail song of hope and fear.  
Thou art Love, of one accord  
With kind Sleep to bring her near,  
Still-eyed, deep-eyed, ah how dear !  
Master, Lord,  
In her name implor'd, O hear !

## JENNY.

*Vengeance of Jenny's case! Fie on her! Never name  
her, child!*

(MRS. QUICKLY.) 1

**L**AZY laughing languid Jenny,  
Fond of a kiss and fond of a guinea,<sup>2</sup>  
Whose head upon my knee to-night  
Rests for a while, as if grown light  
With all our dances and the sound  
To which the wild tunes spun you round:  
Fair Jenny mine, the thoughtless queen  
Of kisses which the blush between  
Could hardly make much daintier;  
Whose eyes are as blue skies, whose hair  
Is countless gold incomparable:  
Fresh flower, scarce touched with signs that tell  
Of Love's exuberant hotbed:—Nay,  
Poor flower left torn since yesterday  
Until to-morrow leave you bare;  
Poor handful of bright spring-water  
Flung in the whirlpool's shrieking face;  
Poor shameful Jenny, full of grace  
Thus with your head upon my knee;—  
Whose person or whose purse may be  
The lodestar of your reverie?

This room of yours, my Jenny, looks  
A change from mine so full of books,  
Whose serried ranks hold fast, forsooth,  
So many captive hours of youth,—  
The hours they thief from day and night  
To make one's cherished work come right,  
And leave it wrong for all their theft,  
Even as to-night my work was left:  
Until I vowed that since my brain  
And eyes of dancing seemed so fain,

*My feet should have some dancing too :—  
And thus it was I met with you.  
Well, I suppose 't was hard to part,  
For here I am. And now, sweetheart,  
You seem too tired to get to bed.*

*It was a careless life I led  
When rooms like this were scarce so strange  
Not long ago. What breeds the change,—  
The many aims or the few years?  
Because to-night it all appears  
Something I do not know again.*

*The cloud's not danced out of my brain,—  
The cloud that made it turn and swim  
While hour by hour the books grew dim.  
Why, Jenny, as I watch you there,—  
For all your wealth of loosened hair,  
Your silk ungirdled and unlac'd  
And warm sweets open to the waist,  
All golden in the lamplight's gleam,—  
You know not what a book you seem,  
Half-read by lightning in a dream!  
How should you know, my Jenny? Nay,  
And I should be ashamed to say :—  
Poor beauty, so well worth a kiss!  
But while my thought runs on like this  
With wasteful whims more than enough,  
I wonder what you're thinking of.*

*If of myself you think at all,  
What is the thought?—conjectural  
On sorry matters best unsolved?—  
Or inly is each grace revolved  
To fit me with a lure?—or (sad  
To think!) perhaps you're merely glad  
That I'm not drunk or ruffianly  
And let you rest upon my knee.*



For sometimes, were the truth confess'd,<sup>3</sup>  
You're thankful for a little rest,—  
Glad from the crush to rest within,  
From the heart-sickness and the din  
Where envy's voice at virtue's pitch  
Mocks you because your gown is rich;  
And from the pale girl's dumb rebuke,  
Whose ill-clad grace and toil-worn look  
Proclaim the strength that keeps her weak,  
And other nights than yours bespeak;  
And from the wise unchildish elf,  
To schoolmate lesser than himself  
Pointing you out, what thing you are:—  
Yes, from the daily jeer and jar,  
From shame and shame's outbraving too,  
Is rest not sometimes sweet to you?—  
But most from the hatefulnness of man  
Who spares not to end what he began,  
Whose acts are ill and his speech ill,  
Who, having used you at his will,  
Thrusts you aside, as when I dine  
I serve the dishes and the wine.

Well, handsome Jenny mine, sit up,  
I've filled our glasses, let us sup,  
And do not let me think of you,  
Lest shame of yours suffice for two.  
What, still so tired? Well, well then, keep  
Your head there, so you do not sleep;  
But that the weariness may pass  
And leave you merry, take this glass.  
Ah! lazy lily hand, more bless'd  
If ne'er in rings it had been dress'd  
Nor ever by a glove conceal'd!

Behold the lilies of the field,  
They toil not neither do they spin;  
(So doth the ancient text begin,—  
Not of such rest as one of these  
Can share.) Another rest and ease

Along each summer-sated path  
From its new lord the garden bath,  
Than that whose spring in blessings ran  
Which praised the bounteous husbandman,  
Ere yet, in days of bankering breath,  
The lilies sickened unto death.

What, Jenny, are your lilies dead?  
Aye, and the snow-white leaves are spread  
Like winter on the garden-bed.  
But you had roses left in May,—  
They were not gone too. Jenny, nay,  
But must your roses die, and those  
Their purpled buds that should uncloze?  
Even so; the leaves are curled apart,  
Still red as from the broken heart,  
And here's the naked stem of thorns.

Nay, nay, mere words. Here nothing warns  
As yet of winter. Sickness here  
Or want alone could waken fear,—  
Nothing but passion wrings a tear.  
Except when there may rise unsought  
Haply at times a passing thought  
Of the old days which seem to be  
Much older than any history  
That is written in any book;  
When she would lie in fields and look  
Along the ground through the blown grass,  
And wonder where the city was,  
Far out of sight, whose broil and bale  
They told her then for a child's tale.<sup>4</sup>

Jenny, you know the city now.  
A child can tell the tale there, how  
Some things which are not yet enroll'd  
In market-lists are bought and sold  
Even till the early Sunday light,  
When Saturday night is market-night



Everywhere, be it dry or wet,  
And market-night in the Haymarket.  
Our learned London children know,  
Poor Jenny, all your pride and woe ;  
Have seen your lifted silken skirt  
Advertise dainties through the dirt ;  
Have seen your coach-wheels splash rebuke  
On virtue ; and have learned your look  
When, wealth and health slipped past, you stare  
Along the streets alone, and there,  
Round the long park, across the bridge,  
The cold lamps at the pavement's edge  
Wind on together and apart,  
A fiery serpent for your heart.

Let the thoughts pass, an empty cloud !  
Suppose I were to think aloud, —  
What if to her all this were said ?  
Why, as a volume seldom read  
Being opened halfway shuts again,  
So might the pages of her brain  
Be parted at such words, and thence  
Close back upon the dusty sense.  
For is there hue or shape defin'd  
In Jenny's desecrated mind,  
Where all contagious currents meet,  
A Lethe of the middle street ?  
Nay, it reflects not any face,  
Nor sound is in its sluggish pace,  
But as they coil those eddies clot,  
And night and day remember not.

Why, Jenny, you're asleep at last ! —  
Asleep, poor Jenny, hard and fast, —  
So young and soft and tired ; so fair,  
With chin thus nestled in your hair,  
Mouth quiet, eyelids almost blue  
As if some sky of dreams shone through !



*Just as another woman sleeps!  
Enough to throw one's thoughts in heaps  
Of doubt and horror,—what to say  
Or think,—this awful secret sway,  
The potter's power over the clay!  
Of the same lump (it has been said)  
For honour and dishonour made,  
Two sister vessels. Here is one.*

*My cousin Nell is fond of fun,  
And fond of dress, and change, and praise  
So mere a woman in her ways :  
And if her sweet eyes rich in youth  
Are like her lips that tell the truth,  
My cousin Nell is fond of love.  
And she's the girl I'm proudest of.  
Who does not prize her, guard her well?  
The love of change, in cousin Nell,  
Shall find the best and hold it dear :  
The unconquered mirth turn quieter  
Not through her own, through others' woe :  
The conscious pride of beauty glow  
Beside another's pride in her,  
One little part of all they share.  
For Love himself shall ripen these  
In a kind soil to just increase  
Through years of fertilizing peace.*

*Of the same lump (as it is said)  
For honour and dishonour made,  
Two sister vessels. Here is one.*

*It makes a goblin of the sun.*

*So pure,—so fall'n! How dare to think  
Of the first common kindred link?  
Yet, Jenny, till the world shall burn  
It seems that all things take their turn;*

*And who shall say but this fair tree  
May need, in changes that may be,  
Your children's children's charity?  
Scorned then, no doubt, as you are scorn'd!  
Shall no man hold his pride forewarn'd  
Till in the end, the Day of Days,  
At Judgment, one of his own race,  
As frail and lost as you, shall rise,—  
His daughter, with his mother's eyes?*

*How Jenny's clock ticks on the shelf!  
Might not the dial scorn itself  
That has such hours to register?  
Yet as to me, even so to her  
Are golden sun and silver moon,  
In daily largesse of earth's boon,  
Counted for life-coins to one tune.  
And if, as blindfold fates are toss'd,  
Through some one man this life be lost,  
Shall soul not somehow pay for soul?*

*Fair shines the gilded aureole  
In which our highest painters place  
Some living woman's simple face.  
And the stilled features thus descried  
As Jenny's long throat droops aside,—  
The shadows where the cheeks are thin,  
And pure wide curve from ear to chin,—  
With Raffael's, Leonardo's hand  
To show them to men's souls, might stand,  
Whole ages long, the whole world through,  
For preachings of what God can do.  
What has man done here? How atone,  
Great God, for this which man has done?  
And for the body and soul which by  
Man's pitiless doom must now comply  
With lifelong hell, what lullaby  
Of sweet forgetful second birth  
Remains? All dark. No sign on earth*



What measure of God's rest endows  
The many mansions of his house.

If but a woman's heart might see  
Such erring heart unerringly  
For once! But that can never be.

Like a rose shut in a book  
In which pure women may not look,  
For its base pages claim control  
To crush the flower within the soul;  
Where through each dead rose-leaf that clings,  
Pale as transparent Psyche-wings,  
To the vile text, are traced such things  
As might make lady's cheek indeed  
More than a living rose to read;  
So nought save foolish foulness may  
Watch with hard eyes the sure decay;  
And so the life-blood of this rose,  
Puddled with shameful knowledge, flows  
Through leaves no chaste hand may uncloze:  
Yet still it keeps such faded show  
Of when 'twas gathered long ago,  
That the crushed petals' lovely grain,  
The sweetness of the sanguine stain,  
Seen of a woman's eyes, must make  
Her pitiful heart, so prone to ache,  
Love roses better for its sake:—  
Only that this can never be:—  
Even so unto her sex is she.

Yet, Jenny, looking long at you,<sup>5</sup>  
The woman almost fades from view.  
A cipher of man's changeless sum  
Of lust, past, present, and to come,  
Is left. A riddle that one shrinks  
To challenge from the scornful sphinx.

Like a toad within a stone<sup>6</sup>  
Seated while Time crumbles on;



*Which sits there since the earth was curs'd  
For Man's transgression at the first;  
Which, living through all centuries,  
Not once has seen the sun arise;  
Whose life, to its cold circle charmed,  
The earth's whole summers have not warmed;  
Which always — whitherso the stone  
Be flung — sits there, deaf, blind, alone; —  
Aye, and shall not be driven out  
Till that which shuts him round about  
Break at the very Master's stroke,  
And the dust thereof vanish as smoke,  
And the seed of Man vanish as dust: —  
Even so within this world is Lust.*

*Come, come, what use in thoughts like this?  
Poor little Jenny, good to kiss, —  
You'd not believe by what strange roads  
Thought travels, when your beauty goads  
A man to-night to think of toads!  
Jenny, wake up. . . . Why, there's the dawn!*

*And there's an early waggon drawn  
To market, and some sheep that jog  
Bleating before a barking dog;  
And the old streets come peering through  
Another night that London knew;  
And all as ghostlike as the lamps.*

*So on the wings of day decamps  
My last night's frolic. Glooms begin  
To shiver off as lights creep in  
Past the gauze curtains half drawn-to.  
And the lamp's doubled shade grows blue, —  
Your lamp, my Jenny, kept alight,  
Like a wise virgin's, all one night!  
And in the alcove coolly spread  
Glimmers with dawn your empty bed;*

*And yonder your fair face I see  
Reflected lying on my knee,  
Where teems with first foreshadowings  
Your pier-glass scrawled with diamond rings :  
And on your bosom all night worn  
Yesterday's rose now droops forlorn,  
But dies not yet this summer morn.*

*And now without, as if some word  
Had called upon them that they heard,  
The London sparrows far and nigh  
Clamour together suddenly ;  
And Jenny's cage-bird grown awake  
Here in their song his part must take,  
Because here too the day doth break.*

*And somehow in myself the dawn  
Among stirred clouds and veils withdrawn  
Strikes greyly on her. Let her sleep.  
But will it wake her if I heap  
These cushions thus beneath her head  
Where my knee was ? No,—there's your bed,  
My Jenny, while you dream. And there  
I lay among your golden hair  
Perhaps the subject of your dreams,  
These golden coins.*

*For still one deems  
That Jenny's flattering sleep confers  
New magic on the magic purse,—  
Grim web, how clogged with shrivelled flies !  
Between the threads fine fumes arise  
And shape their pictures in the brain.  
There roll no streets in glare and rain,  
Nor flagrant man-swine whets his tusk ;  
But delicately sighs in musk  
The homage of the dim boudoir ;  
Or like a palpitating star  
Thrilled into song, the opera-night  
Breathes faint in the quick pulse of light ;*



Or at the carriage-window shine  
Rich wares for choice ; or, free to dine,  
Whirls through its hour of health (divine  
For her) the concourse of the Park.  
And though in the discounted dark  
Her functions there and here are one,  
Beneath the lamps and in the sun  
There reigns at least the acknowledged belle  
Apparelled beyond parallel.  
Ah, Jenny, yes, we know your dreams.

For even the Paphian Venus seems  
A goddess o'er the realms of love,  
When silver-shrined in shadowy grove :  
Aye, or let offerings nicely placed  
But bide Priapus to the waist,  
And whoso looks on him shall see  
An eligible deity.

Why, Jenny, waking here alone  
May help you to remember one,  
Though all the memory's long outworn  
Of many a double-pillowed morn.  
I think I see you when you wake,  
And rub your eyes for me, and shake  
My gold, in rising, from your hair,  
A Danaë for a moment there.

Jenny, my love rang true ! for still  
Love at first sight is vague, until  
That tinkling makes him audible.

And must I mock you to the last,  
Ashamed of my own shame, — aghast  
Because some thoughts not born amiss  
Rose at a poor fair face like this ?



Well, of such thoughts so much I know :  
In my life, as in hers, they show,  
By a far gleam which I may near,  
A dark path I can strive to clear.

Only one kiss. Good-bye, my dear.

## THE PORTRAIT.

**T**HIS is her picture as she was :  
It seems a thing to wonder on,  
As though mine image in the glass  
Should tarry when myself am gone.  
I gaze until she seems to stir,—  
Until mine eyes almost aver  
That now, even now, the sweet lips part  
To breathe the words of the sweet heart :—  
And yet the earth is over her.

Alas! even such the thin-drawn ray  
That makes the prison-depths more rude,—  
The drip of water night and day  
Giving a tongue to solitude.  
Yet only this, of love's whole prize,  
Remains; save what in mournful guise  
Takes counsel with my soul alone,—  
Save what is secret and unknown,  
Below the earth, above the skies.

In painting her I shrined her face  
'Mid mystic trees, where light falls in  
Hardly at all; a covert place  
Where you might think to find a din  
Of doubtful talk, and a live flame  
Wandering, and many a shape whose name  
Not itself knoweth, and old dew,  
And your own footsteps meeting you,  
And all things going as they came.

A deep dim wood; and there she stands  
As in that wood that day: for so  
Was the still movement of her hands  
And such the pure line's gracious flow.

*And passing fair the type must seem,  
Unknown the presence and the dream.*

*'Tis she: though of herself, alas!  
Less than her shadow on the grass  
Or than her image in the stream.*

*That day we met there, I and she  
One with the other all alone;  
And we were blithe; yet memory  
Saddens those hours, as when the moon  
Looks upon daylight. And with her  
I stooped to drink the spring-water,  
Atbirst where other waters sprang:  
And where the echo is, she sang,—  
My soul another echo there.*

*But when that hour my soul won strength  
For words whose silence wastes and kills,  
Dull raindrops smote us, and at length  
Thundered the beat within the hills.  
That eve I spoke those words again  
Beside the pelted window-pane;  
And there she hearkened what I said,  
With under-glances that surveyed  
The empty pastures blind with rain.*

*Next day the memories of these things,  
Like leaves through which a bird has flown,  
Still vibrated with Love's warm wings;  
Till I must make them all my own  
And paint this picture. So, 'twixt ease  
Of talk and sweet long silences,  
She stood among the plants in bloom  
At windows of a summer room,  
To feign the shadow of the trees.*

*And as I wrought, while all above  
And all around was fragrant air,*



*In the sick burthen of my love  
It seemed each sun-thrilled blossom there  
Beat like a heart among the leaves.  
O heart that never beats nor heaves,  
In that one darkness lying still,  
What now to thee my love's great will  
Or the fine web the sunshine weaves?*

*For now doth daylight disavow  
Those days — nought left to see or hear.  
Only in solemn whispers now  
At night-time these things reach mine ear ;  
When the leaf-shadows at a breath  
Shrink in the road, and all the heath,  
Forest and water, far and wide,  
In limpid starlight glorified,  
Lie like the mystery of death.*

*Last night at last I could have slept,  
And yet delayed my sleep till dawn,  
Still wandering. Then it was I wept :  
For unawares I came upon  
Those glades where once she walked with me :  
And as I stood there suddenly,  
All wan with traversing the night,  
Upon the desolate verge of light  
Yearned loud the iron-bosomed sea.*

*Even so, where Heaven holds breath and bears  
The beating heart of Love's own breast,—  
Where round the secret of all spheres  
All angels lay their wings to rest,—  
How shall my soul stand rapt and awed,  
When, by the new birth borne abroad  
Throughout the music of the suns,  
It enters in her soul at once  
And knows the silence there for God!*

Here with her face doth memory sit  
    Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline,  
Till other eyes shall look from it,  
    Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,  
Even than the old gaze tenderer :  
While hopes and aims long lost with her  
    Stand round her image side by side,  
    Like tombs of pilgrims that have died  
About the Holy Sepulchre.

## THE STREAM'S SECRET.

**W**HAT thing unto mine ear  
Wouldst thou convey,—what secret thing,  
O wandering water ever whispering?  
Surely thy speech shall be of her.  
Thou water, O thou whispering wanderer,  
What message dost thou bring?

Say, hath not Love leaned low  
This hour beside thy far well-head,  
And there through jealous hollowed fingers said  
The thing that most I long to know,—  
Murmuring with curls all dabbled in thy flow  
And washed lips rosy red?

He told it to thee there  
Where thy voice hath a louder tone;  
But where it welters to this little moan  
His will decrees that I should bear.  
Now speak: for with the silence is no fear,  
And I am all alone.

Shall Time not still endow  
One hour with life, and I and she  
Slake in one kiss the thirst of memory?  
Say, stream; lest Love should disavow  
Thy service, and the bird upon the bough  
Sing first to tell it me.

What whisperest thou? Nay, why  
Name the dead hours? I mind them well:  
Their ghosts in many darkened doorways dwell



*With desolate eyes to know them by.  
The hour that must be born ere it can die,—  
Of that I'd have thee tell.*

*But hear, before thou speak!  
Withhold, I pray, the vain behest  
That while the maze hath still its bower for quest  
My burning heart should cease to seek.  
Be sure that Love ordained for souls more meek  
His roadside dells of rest.*

*Stream, when this silver thread  
In flood-time is a torrent brown  
May any bulwark bind thy foaming crown?  
Shall not the waters surge and spread  
And to the crannied boulders of their bed  
Still shoot the dead drift down?*

*Let no rebuke find place  
In speech of thine: or it shall prove  
That thou dost ill expound the words of Love,  
Even as thine eddy's rippling race  
Would blur the perfect image of his face.  
I will have none thereof.*

*O learn and understand  
That 'gainst the wrongs himself did wreak  
Love sought her aid; until her shadowy cheek  
And eyes beseeching gave command;  
And compassed in her close compassionate hand  
My heart must burn and speak.*

*For then at last we spoke  
What eyes so oft had told to eyes  
Through that long-lingering silence whose half-sighs  
Alone the buried secret broke,  
Which with snatched hands and lips' reverberate stroke  
Then from the heart did rise.*

But she is far away  
Now ; nor the hours of night grown hoar  
Bring yet to me, long gazing from the door,  
The wind-stirred robe of roseate gray  
And rose-crown of the hour that leads the day  
When we shall meet once more.

Dark as thy blinded wave  
When brimming midnight floods the glen,—  
Bright as the laughter of thy runnels when  
The dawn yields all the light they crave ;  
Even so these hours to wound and that to save  
Are sisters in Love's ken.

Oh sweet her bending grace  
Then when I kneel beside her feet ;  
And sweet her eyes' o'erhanging heaven ; and sweet  
The gathering folds of her embrace ;  
And her fall'n hair at last shed round my face  
When breaths and tears shall meet.

Beneath her sheltering hair,  
In the warm silence near her breast,  
Our kisses and our sobs shall sink to rest ;  
As in some still trance made aware  
That day and night have wrought to fulness there  
And Love has built our nest.

And as in the dim grove,  
When the rains cease that hushed them long,  
'Mid glistening boughs the song-birds wake to song,—  
So from our hearts deep-shrined in love,  
While the leaves throb beneath, around, above,  
The quivering notes shall throng.

Till tenderest words found vain  
Draw back to wonder mute and deep,  
And closed lips in closed arms a silence keep,

Subdued by memory's circling strain,—  
The wind-rapt sound that the wind brings again  
While all the willows weep.

Then by her summoning art  
Shall memory conjure back the sere  
Autumnal Springs, from many a dying year  
Born dead; and, bitter to the heart,  
The very ways where now we walk apart  
Who then shall cling so near.

And with each thought new-grown,  
Some sweet caress or some sweet name  
Low-breathed shall let me know her thought the same,  
Making me rich with every tone  
And touch of the dear heaven so long unknown  
That filled my dreams with flame.

Pity and love shall burn  
In her pressed cheek and cherishing hands;  
And from the living spirit of love that stands  
Between her lips to soothe and yearn,  
Each separate breath shall clasp me round in turn  
And loose my spirit's bands.

Oh passing sweet and dear,  
Then when the worshipped form and face  
Are felt at length in darkling close embrace;  
Round which so oft the sun shone clear,  
With mocking light and pitiless atmosphere,  
In many an hour and place.

Ah me! with what proud growth  
Shall that hour's thirsting race be run;  
While, for each several sweetness still begun  
Afresh, endures love's endless drouth:  
Sweet hands, sweet hair, sweet cheeks, sweet eyes, sweet  
Each singly wooed and won. [mouth,



Yet most with the sweet soul  
Shall love's espousals then be knit ;  
For very passion of peace shall breathe from it  
O'er tremulous wings that touch the goal,  
As on the unmeasured height of Love's control  
The lustral fires are lit.

Therefore, when breast and cheek  
Now part, from long embraces free, —  
Each on the other gazing shall but see  
A self that has no need to speak :  
All things unsought, yet nothing more to seek, —  
One love in unity.

O water wandering past, —  
Albeit to thee I speak this thing,  
O water, thou that wanderest whispering,  
Thou keep'st thy counsel to the last.  
What spell upon thy bosom should Love cast,  
His message thence to wring ?

Nay, must thou bear the tale  
Of the past days, — the heavy debt  
Of life that obdurate time withholds, — ere yet  
To win thine ear these prayers prevail,  
And by thy voice Love's self with high All-hail  
Yield up the love-secret ?

How should all this be told ? —  
All the sad sum of wayworn days ; —  
Heart's anguish in the impenetrable maze ;  
And on the waste uncoloured wold  
The visible burthen of the sun grown cold  
And the moon's labouring gaze ?

Alas ! shall hope be nurs'd  
On life's all-succouring breast in vain,  
And made so perfect only to be slain ?

Or shall not rather the sweet thirst  
Even yet rejoice the heart with warmth dispers'd  
And strength grown fair again?

Stands it not by the door —  
Love's Hour — till she and I shall meet;  
With bodiless form and unapparent feet  
That cast no shadow yet before,  
Though round its head the dawn begins to pour  
The breath that makes day sweet?

Its eyes invisible  
Watch till the dial's thin-thrown shade  
Be born, — yea, till the journeying line be laid  
Upon the point that wakes the spell,  
And there in lovelier light than tongue can tell  
Its presence stand array'd.

Its soul remembers yet  
Those sunless hours that passed it by;  
And still it bears the night's disconsolate cry,  
And feels the branches wringing wet  
Cast on its brow, that may not once forget,  
Dumb tears from the blind sky.

But oh! when now her foot  
Draws near, for whose sake night and day  
Were long in weary longing sighed away, —  
The Hour of Love, 'mid airs grown mute,  
Shall sing beside the door, and Love's own lute  
Thrill to the passionate lay.

Thou know'st, for Love has told  
Within thine ear, O stream, how soon  
That song shall lift its sweet appointed tune.  
O tell me, for my lips are cold,  
And in my veins the blood is waxing old  
Even while I beg the boon.

So, in that hour of sighs  
Assuaged, shall we beside this stone  
Yield thanks for grace ; while in thy mirror shown  
The twofold image softly lies,  
Until we kiss, and each in other's eyes  
Is imaged all alone.

Still silent ? Can no art  
Of Love's then move thy pity ? Nay,  
To thee let nothing come that owns his sway :  
Let happy lovers have no part  
With thee ; nor even so sad and poor a heart  
As thou hast spurned to-day.

To-day ? Lo ! night is here.  
The glen grows heavy with some veil  
Risen from the earth or fall'n to make earth pale ;  
And all stands bushed to eye and ear,  
Until the night-wind shake the shade like fear  
And every covert quail.

Ah ! by a colder wave  
On deathblow airs the hour must come  
Which to thy heart, my love, shall call me home.  
Between the lips of the low cave  
Against that night the lapping waters lave,  
And the dark lips are dumb.

But there Love's self doth stand,  
And with Life's weary wings far flown,  
And with Death's eyes that make the water moan,  
Gathers the water in his hand :  
And they that drink know nought of sky or land  
But only love alone.

O soul-sequestered face  
Far off, — O were that night but now !  
So even beside that stream even I and thou



Through thirsting lips should draw Love's grace,  
And in the zone of that supreme embrace  
Bind aching breast and brow.

O water whispering  
Still through the dark into mine ears,—  
As with mine eyes, is it not now with hers?—  
Mine eyes that add to thy cold spring,  
Wan water, wandering water weltering,  
This hidden tide of tears.

## THE CARD-DEALER.

**C**OULD you not drink her gaze like wine?  
Yet though its splendour swoon  
Into the silence languidly  
As a tune into a tune,  
Those eyes unravel the coiled night  
And know the stars at noon.

The gold that's heaped beside her hand,  
In truth rich prize it were;  
And rich the dreams that wreath her brows  
With magic stillness there;  
And he were rich who should unwind  
That woven golden hair.

Around her, where she sits, the dance  
Now breathes its eager beat;  
And not more lightly or more true  
Fall there the dancers' feet  
Than fall her cards on the bright board  
As 'twere a heart that beat.

Her fingers let them softly through,  
Smooth polished silent things;  
And each one as it falls reflects  
In swift light-shadowings,  
Blood-red and purple, green and blue,  
The great eyes of her rings.

Whom plays she with? With thee, who lov'st  
Those gems upon her hand;  
With me, who search her secret brows;  
With all men, bless'd or bann'd.  
We play together, she and we,  
Within a vain strange land:

A land without any order,—  
Day even as night, (one saith,) —  
Where who lieth down ariseth not  
Nor the sleeper awakeneth;  
A land of darkness as darkness itself  
And of the shadow of death.

What be her cards, you ask? Even these:—  
The heart, that doth but crave  
More, having fed; the diamond,  
Skilled to make base seem brave;  
The club, for smiting in the dark;  
The spade, to dig a grave.

And do you ask what game she plays?  
With me 'tis lost or won;  
With thee it is playing still; with him  
It is not well begun;  
But 'tis a game she plays with all  
Beneath the sway o' the sun.

Thou seest the card that falls,— she knows  
The card that followeth:  
Her game in thy tongue is called Life,  
As ebbs thy daily breath:  
When she shall speak, thou'lt learn her tongue  
And know she calls it Death.



## MY SISTER'S SLEEP.

**S**HE fell asleep on Christmas Eve :  
At length the long-ungranted shade  
Of weary eyelids overweigh'd  
The pain nought else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day  
Over the bed from chime to chime,  
Then raised herself for the first time,  
And as she sat her down, did pray.

Her little work-table was spread  
With work to finish. For the glare  
Made by her candle, she had care  
To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up,  
Of winter radiance sheer and thin ;  
The hollow halo it was in  
Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle sound  
Of flame, by vents the firesbine drove  
And reddened. In its dim alcove  
The mirror shed a clearness round.

I had been sitting up some nights,  
And my tired mind felt weak and blank ;  
Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank  
The stillness and the broken lights.

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling years  
Heard in each hour, crept off ; and then  
The ruffled silence spread again,  
Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat :  
Her needles, as she laid them down,  
Met lightly, and her silken gown  
Settled: no other noise than that.

"Glory unto the Newly Born!"  
So, as said angels, she did say;  
Because we were in Christmas Day,  
Though it would still be long till morn.

Just then in the room over us  
There was a pushing back of chairs,  
As some who had sat unawares  
So late, now heard the hour, and rose.

With anxious softly-stepping haste  
Our mother went where Margaret lay,  
Fearing the sounds o'erhead—should they  
Have broken her long watched-for rest!

She stopped an instant, calm, and turned;  
But suddenly turned back again;  
And all her features seemed in pain  
With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,  
And held my breath, and spoke no word:  
There was none spoken; but I heard  
The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept :  
And both my arms fell, and I said,  
"God knows I knew that she was dead."  
And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn  
A little after twelve o'clock,  
We said, ere the first quarter struck,  
"Christ's blessing on the newly born!"

## A NEW-YEAR'S BURDEN.

**A**LONG the grass sweet airs are blown  
Our way this day in Spring.

Of all the songs that we have known

Now which one shall we sing?

Not that, my love, ah no!—

Not this, my love? why, so!—

Yet both were ours, but hours will come and go.

The grove is all a pale frail mist,

The new year sucks the sun.

Of all the kisses that we kissed

Now which shall be the one?

Not that, my love, ah no!—

Not this, my love?—heigh-ho

For all the sweets that all the winds can blow!

The branches cross above our eyes,

The skies are in a net:

And what's the thing beneath the skies

We two would most forget?

Not birth, my love, no, no,—

Not death, my love, no, no,—

The love once ours, but ours long hours ago.



EVEN SO.

**S**o it is, my dear.  
All such things touch secret strings  
For heavy hearts to hear.  
So it is, my dear.

Very like indeed:  
Sea and sky, afar, on high,  
Sand and strewn seaweed, —  
Very like indeed.

But the sea stands spread  
As one wall with the flat skies,  
Where the lean black craft like flies  
Seem well-nigh stagnated,  
Soon to drop off dead.

Seemed it so to us  
When I was thine and thou wast mine,  
And all these things were thus,  
But all our world in us?

Could we be so now?  
Not if all beneath heaven's pall  
Lay dead but I and thou,  
Could we be so now!

AN OLD SONG ENDED.

“**H**ow should I your true love know  
From another one?”

“By his cockle-hat and staff  
And his sandal-shoon.”

“*And what signs have told you now  
That he hastens home?*”

“*Lo! the spring is nearly gone,  
He is nearly come.*”

“*For a token is there nought,  
Say, that he should bring?*”

“*He will bear a ring I gave  
And another ring.*”

“*How may I, when he shall ask,  
Tell him who lies there?*”

“*Nay, but leave my face unveiled  
And unbound my hair.*”

“*Can you say to me some word  
I shall say to him?*”

“*Say I'm looking in his eyes  
Though my eyes are dim.*”

## SPHERAL CHANGE.

**I***N this new shade of Death, the show  
Passes me still of form and face;  
Some bent, some gazing as they go,  
Some swiftly, some at a dull pace,  
Not one that speaks in any case.*

*If only one might speak! — the one  
Who never waits till I come near;  
But always seated all alone  
As listening to the sunken air,  
Is gone before I come to her.*

*O dearest! while we lived and died  
A living death in every day,  
Some hours we still were side by side,  
When where I was you too might stay  
And rest and need not go away.*

*O nearest, furthest! Can there be  
At length some hard-earned heart-won home,  
Where, — exile changed for sanctuary, —  
Our lot may fill indeed its sum,  
And you may wait and I may come?*



ALAS, SO LONG!

AH! dear one, we were young so long,  
It seemed that youth would never go,  
For skies and trees were ever in song  
And water in singing flow  
In the days we never again shall know.

Alas, so long!

Ab! then was it all Spring weather?

Nay, but we were young and together.

Ab! dear one, I've been old so long,  
It seems that age is loth to part,  
Though days and years have never a song,  
And oh! have they still the art  
That warmed the pulses of heart to heart?

Alas, so long!

Ab! then was it all Spring weather?

Nay, but we were young and together.

Ab! dear one, you've been dead so long,—  
How long until we meet again,  
Where hours may never lose their song  
Nor flowers forget the rain  
In glad noonlight that never shall wane?

Alas, so long!

Ab! shall it be then Spring weather,

And ah! shall we be young together?

## THE CLOUD CONFINES.

**T**HE day is dark and the night  
To him that would search their heart ;  
No lips of cloud that will part  
Nor morning song in the light :  
Only, gazing alone,  
To him wild shadows are shown,  
Deep under deep unknown  
And height above unknown height.  
Still we say as we go, —  
“ Strange to think by the way,  
Whatever there is to know,  
That shall we know one day.”

The Past is over and fled ;  
Named new, we name it the old ;  
Thereof some tale hath been told,  
But no word comes from the dead ;  
Whether at all they be,  
Or whether as bond or free,  
Or whether they too were we,  
Or by what spell they have sped.  
Still we say as we go, —  
“ Strange to think by the way,  
Whatever there is to know,  
That shall we know one day.”

What of the heart of hate  
That beats in thy breast, O Time ? —  
Red strife from the furthest prime,  
And anguish of fierce debate  
War that shatters her slain,  
And peace that grinds them as grain,  
And eyes fixed ever in vain  
On the pitiless eyes of Fate.

Still we say as we go,—  
“Strange to think by the way,  
Whatever there is to know,  
That shall we know one day.”

What of the heart of love  
That bleeds in thy breast, O Man?—  
Thy kisses snatched 'neath the ban  
Of fangs that mock them above;  
Thy bells prolonged unto knells,  
Thy hope that a breath dispels,  
Thy bitter forlorn farewells  
And the empty echoes thereof?  
Still we say as we go,—  
“Strange to think by the way,  
Whatever there is to know,  
That shall we know one day.”

The sky leans dumb on the sea,  
Aweary with all its wings;  
And oh! the song the sea sings  
Is dark everlastingly.  
Our past is clean forgot,  
Our present is and is not,  
Our future's a sealed seedplot,  
And what betwixt them are we?—  
We who say as we go,—  
“Strange to think by the way,  
Whatever there is to know,  
That shall we know one day.”



THREE TRANSLATIONS FROM  
FRANÇOIS VILLON, 1450.

I.

THE BALLAD OF DEAD LADIES.

**T**ELL me now in what hidden way is  
Lady Flora the lovely Roman?  
Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,  
Neither of them the fairer woman?  
Where is Echo, beheld of no man,  
Only heard on river and mere,—  
She whose beauty was more than human? . . .  
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Where's Héloise, the learned nun,  
For whose sake Abeillard, I ween,  
Lost manhood and put priesthood on?  
(From Love he won such dule and teen!)  
And where, I pray you, is the Queen  
Who willed that Buridan should steer  
Sewed in a sack's mouth down the Seine? . . .  
But where are the snows of yester-year?

White Queen Blanche, like a queen of lilies,  
With a voice like any mermaiden,—  
Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice, Alice,  
And Ermengarde the lady of Maine,—  
And that good Joan whom Englishmen  
At Rouen doomed and burned her there,—  
Mother of God, where are they then? . . .  
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,  
Where they are gone, nor yet this year,  
Save with thus much for an overword,—  
But where are the snows of yester-year?

II.

TO DEATH, OF HIS LADY.

**D**EATH, of thee do I make my moan,  
Who badst my lady away from me,  
Nor wilt assuage thine enmity  
Till with her life thou hast mine own :  
For since that hour my strength has flown.  
Lo ! what wrong was her life to thee,  
Death ?

Two we were, and the heart was one ;  
Which now being dead, dead I must be,  
Or seem alive as lifelessly  
As in the choir the painted stone,  
Death !

### III.

#### HIS MOTHER'S SERVICE TO OUR LADY.

**L**ADY of Heaven and Earth, and therewithal  
Crowned Empress of the nether clefts of Hell,—  
I, thy poor Christian, on thy name do call,  
Commending me to thee, with thee to dwell,  
Albeit in nought I be commendable.  
But all mine undeserving may not mar  
Such mercies as thy sovereign mercies are;  
Without the which (as true words testify)  
No soul can reach thy Heaven so fair and far.  
Even in this faith I choose to live and die.

Unto thy Son say thou that I am His,  
And to me graceless make Him gracious.  
Sad Mary of Egypt lacked not of that bliss,  
Nor yet the sorrowful clerk Theophilus,  
Whose bitter sins were set aside even thus  
Though to the Fiend his bounden service was.  
Oh help me, lest in vain for me should pass  
(Sweet Virgin that shalt have no loss thereby!)  
The blessed Host and sacring of the Mass.  
Even in this faith I choose to live and die.

A pitiful poor woman, shrunk and old,  
I am, and nothing learn'd in letter-lore.  
Within my parish-cloister I behold  
A painted Heaven where harps and lutes adore,  
And eke an Hell whose damned folk seethe full sore:  
One bringeth fear, the other joy to me.  
That joy, great Goddess, make thou mine to be,—  
Thou of whom all must ask it even as I;  
And that which faith desires, that let it see.  
For in this faith I choose to live and die.



*O excellent Virgin Princess! thou didst bear  
King Jesus, the most excellent comforter,  
Who even of this our weakness craved a share,  
And for our sake stooped to us from on high,  
Offering to death His young life sweet and fair.  
Such as He is, Our Lord, I Him declare,  
And in this faith I choose to live and die.*

## TROY TOWN.

**H**EAVENBORN HELEN, *Sparta's queen,*  
(O Troy Town!)

*Had two breasts of heavenly sheen,  
The sun and moon of the heart's desire :  
All Love's lordship lay between.*

(O Troy's down,  
Tall Troy's on fire!)

*Helen knelt at Venus' shrine,*  
(O Troy Town!)

*Saying, " A little gift is mine,  
A little gift for a heart's desire.  
Hear me speak and make me a sign!*

(O Troy's down,  
Tall Troy's on fire!)

*"Look, I bring thee a carven cup ;*  
(O Troy Town!)

*See it here as I hold it up, —  
Shaped it is to the heart's desire,  
Fit to fill when the gods would sup.*

(O Troy's down,  
Tall Troy's on fire!)

*"It was moulded like my breast ;*  
(O Troy Town!)

*He that sees it may not rest,  
Rest at all for his heart's desire.  
O give ear to my heart's bebest!*

(O Troy's down,  
Tall Troy's on fire!)

*"See my breast, how like it is ;  
(O Troy Town!)  
See it bare for the air to kiss!  
Is the cup to thy heart's desire?  
O for the breast, O make it his!  
(O Troy's down,  
Tall Troy's on fire!)*

*"Yea, for my bosom here I sue ;  
(O Troy Town!)  
Thou must give it where 'tis due,  
Give it there to the heart's desire.  
Whom do I give my bosom to?  
(O Troy's down,  
Tall Troy's on fire!)*

*"Each twin breast is an apple sweet.  
(O Troy Town!)  
Once an apple stirred the beat  
Of thy heart with the heart's desire :—  
Say, who brought it then to thy feet?  
(O Troy's down,  
Tall Troy's on fire!)*

*"They that claimed it then were three :  
(O Troy Town!)  
For thy sake two hearts did he  
Make forlorn of the heart's desire.  
Do for him as he did for thee!  
(O Troy's down,  
Tall Troy's on fire!)*

*"Mine are apples grown to the south,  
(O Troy Town!)  
Grown to taste in the days of drouth,  
Taste and waste to the heart's desire :  
Mine are apples meet for his mouth."  
(O Troy's down,  
Tall Troy's on fire!)*





SISTER HELEN.

“**W**<sup>HY</sup> did you melt your waxen man,  
Sister Helen?  
To-day is the third since you began.”  
“The time was long, yet the time ran,  
Little brother.”  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Three days to-day, between Hell and Heaven!)

“But if you have done your work aright,  
Sister Helen,  
You’ll let me play, for you said I might.”  
“Be very still in your play to-night,  
Little brother.”  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Third night, to-night, between Hell and Heaven!)

“You said it must melt ere vesper-bell,  
Sister Helen;  
If now it be molten, all is well.”  
“Even so, — nay, peace! you cannot tell,  
Little brother.”  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
O what is this, between Hell and Heaven?)

“Oh the waxen knave was plump to-day,  
Sister Helen;  
How like dead folk he has dropped away!”  
“Nay now, of the dead what can you say,  
Little brother?”  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
What of the dead, between Hell and Heaven?)

*"See, see, the sunken pile of wood,  
Sister Helen,  
Shines through the thinned wax red as blood!"*  
*"Nay now, when looked you yet on blood,  
Little brother?"*  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
How pale she is, between Hell and Heaven!)

*"Now close your eyes, for they're sick and sore,  
Sister Helen,  
And I'll play without the gallery door."*  
*"Aye, let me rest,—I'll lie on the floor,  
Little brother."*  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
What rest to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

*"Here high up in the balcony,  
Sister Helen,  
The moon flies face to face with me."*  
*"Aye, look and say whatever you see,  
Little brother."*  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
What sight to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

*"Outside it's merry in the wind's wake,  
Sister Helen;  
In the shaken trees the chill stars shake."*  
*"Hush, heard you a horse-tread as you spake,  
Little brother?"*  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
What sound to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)

*"I hear a horse-tread, and I see,  
Sister Helen,  
Three horsemen that ride terribly."*  
*"Little brother, whence come the three,  
Little brother?"*  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Whence should they come, between Hell and Heaven?)



*"They come by the bill-verge from Boyne Bar,  
Sister Helen,  
And one draws nigh, but two are afar."  
"Look, look, do you know them who they are,  
Little brother?"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Who should they be, between Hell and Heaven?)*

*"Oh, it's Keith of Eastholm rides so fast,  
Sister Helen,  
For I know the white mane on the blast."  
"The hour has come, has come at last,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Her hour at last, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"He has made a sign and called Halloo!  
Sister Helen,  
And he says that he would speak with you."  
"Oh tell him I fear the frozen dew,  
Little brother."  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Why laughs she thus, between Hell and Heaven?)*

*"The wind is loud, but I hear him cry,  
Sister Helen,  
That Keith of Ewern's like to die."  
"And be and thou, and thou and I,  
Little brother."  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
And they and we, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"Three days ago, on his marriage-morn,  
Sister Helen,  
He sickened, and lies since then forlorn."  
"For bridegroom's side is the bride a thorn,  
Little brother?"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Cold bridal cheer, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"Three days and nights he has lain abed,  
Sister Helen,  
And he prays in torment to be dead."  
"The thing may chance, if he have prayed,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
If he have prayed, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"But he has not ceased to cry to-day,  
Sister Helen,  
That you should take your curse away."  
"My prayer was heard,—he need but pray,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Shall God not hear, between Hell and Heaven?)*

*"But he says, till you take back your ban,  
Sister Helen,  
His soul would pass, yet never can."  
"Nay then, shall I slay a living man,  
Little brother?"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
A living soul, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"But he calls for ever on your name,  
Sister Helen,  
And says that he melts before a flame."  
"My heart for his pleasure fared the same,  
Little brother."  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Fire at the heart, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"Here's Keith of Westholm riding fast,  
Sister Helen,  
For I know the white plume on the blast."  
"The hour, the sweet hour I forecast,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Is the hour sweet, between Hell and Heaven?)*

"He stops to speak, and he stills his horse,  
Sister Helen;  
But his words are drowned in the wind's course."  
"Nay hear, nay hear, you must hear perforce,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
What word now heard, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Oh he says that Keith of Ewern's cry,  
Sister Helen,  
Is ever to see you ere he die."  
"In all that his soul sees, there am I,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
The soul's one sight, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He sends a ring and a broken coin,  
Sister Helen,  
And bids you mind the banks of Boyne."  
"What else he broke will he ever join,  
Little brother?"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
No, never joined, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He yields you these and craves full fain,  
Sister Helen,  
You pardon him in his mortal pain."  
"What else he took will he give again,  
Little brother?"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Not twice to give, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He calls your name in an agony,  
Sister Helen,  
That even dead Love must weep to see."  
"Hate, born of Love, is blind as he,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Love turned to hate, between Hell and Heaven!)



*"Oh it's Keith of Keith now that rides fast,  
Sister Helen,  
For I know the white hair on the blast."  
"The short short hour will soon be past,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Will soon be past, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"He looks at me and he tries to speak,  
Sister Helen,  
But oh! his voice is sad and weak!"  
"What here should the mighty Baron seek,  
Little brother?"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Is this the end, between Hell and Heaven?)*

*"Oh his son still cries, if you forgive,  
Sister Helen,  
The body dies but the soul shall live."  
"Fire shall forgive me as I forgive,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
As she forgives, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"Oh he prays you, as his heart would rive,  
Sister Helen,  
To save his dear son's soul alive."  
"Fire cannot slay it, it shall thrive,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Alas, alas, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"He cries to you, kneeling in the road,  
Sister Helen,  
To go with him for the love of God!"  
"The way is long to his son's abode,  
Little brother."  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
The way is long, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"A lady's here, by a dark steed brought,  
Sister Helen,  
So darkly clad, I saw her not."  
"See her now or never see aught,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
What more to see, between Hell and Heaven?)*

*"Her hood falls back, and the moon shines fair,  
Sister Helen,  
On the Lady of Ewern's golden hair."  
"Blest hour of my power and her despair,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Hour blest and bann'd, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"Pale, pale her cheeks that in pride did glow,  
Sister Helen,  
'Neath the bridal-wreath three days ago."  
"One morn for pride and three days for woe,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Three days, three nights, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"Her clasped hands stretch from her bending head,  
Sister Helen;  
With the loud wind's wail her sobs are wed."  
"What wedding-strains bath her bridal-bed,  
Little brother?"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
What strain but death's, between Hell and Heaven?)*

*"She may not speak, she sinks in a swoon,  
Sister Helen,—  
She lifts her lips and gasps on the moon."  
"Oh! might I but hear her soul's blithe tune,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Her woe's dumb cry, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"They've caught her to Westholm's saddle-bow,  
Sister Helen,  
And her moonlit hair gleams white in its flow."  
"Let it turn whiter than winter snow,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Woe-withered gold, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"O Sister Helen, you heard the bell,  
Sister Helen!  
More loud than the vesper-chime it fell."  
"No vesper-chime, but a dying knell,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
His dying knell, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"Alas! but I fear the heavy sound,  
Sister Helen;  
Is it in the sky or in the ground?"  
"Say, have they turned their horses round,  
Little brother?"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
What would she more, between Hell and Heaven?)*

*"They have raised the old man from his knee,  
Sister Helen,  
And they ride in silence hastily."  
"More fast the naked soul doth flee,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
The naked soul, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"Flank to flank are the three steeds gone,  
Sister Helen,  
But the lady's dark steed goes alone."  
"And lonely her bridegroom's soul hath flown,  
Little brother."  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
The lonely ghost, between Hell and Heaven!)*



*"Oh the wind is sad in the iron chill,  
Sister Helen,  
And weary sad they look by the hill."  
"But he and I are sadder still,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Most sad of all, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"See, see, the wax has dropped from its place,  
Sister Helen,  
And the flames are winning up apace!"  
"Yet here they burn but for a space,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Here for a space, between Hell and Heaven!)*

*"Ah! what white thing at the door has cross'd,  
Sister Helen?  
Ah! what is this that sighs in the frost?"  
"A soul that's lost as mine is lost,  
Little brother!"  
(O Mother, Mary Mother,  
Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven!)*

EDEN BOWER.

**I**t was *Lilith the wife of Adam* :  
(Sing Eden Bower!)  
*Not a drop of her blood was human,*  
*But she was made like a soft sweet woman.*

*Lilith stood on the skirts of Eden ;*  
(Alas the hour!)  
*She was the first that thence was driven ;*  
*With her was hell and with Eve was heaven.*

*In the ear of the Snake said Lilith : —*  
(Sing Eden Bower!)  
*"To thee I come when the rest is over ;*  
*A snake was I when thou wast my lover.*

*"I was the fairest snake in Eden :*  
(Alas the hour!)  
*By the earth's will, new form and feature*  
*Made me a wife for the earth's new creature.*

*"Take me thou as I come from Adam :*  
(Sing Eden Bower!)  
*Once again shall my love subdue thee ;*  
*The past is past and I am come to thee.*

*"O but Adam was thrall to Lilith !*  
(Alas the hour!)  
*All the threads of my hair are golden,*  
*And there in a net his heart was holden.*

*"O and Lilith was queen of Adam !*  
(Sing Eden Bower!)  
*All the day and the night together*  
*My breath could shake his soul like a feather.*

*"What great joys had Adam and Lilith! —*

*(Alas the hour!)*

*Sweet close rings of the serpent's twining,  
As heart in heart lay sighing and pining.*

*"What bright babes had Lilith and Adam! —*

*(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*Shapes that coiled in the woods and waters,  
Glittering sons and radiant daughters.*

*"O thou God, the Lord God of Eden!*

*(Alas the hour!)*

*Say, was this fair body for no man,  
That of Adam's flesh thou mak'st him a woman?*

*"O thou Snake, the King-snake of Eden!*

*(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*God's strong will our necks are under,  
But thou and I may cleave it in sunder.*

*"Help, sweet Snake, sweet lover of Lilith!*

*(Alas the hour!)*

*And let God learn how I loved and hated  
Man in the image of God created.*

*"Help me once against Eve and Adam!*

*(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*Help me once for this one endeavour,  
And then my love shall be thine for ever!*

*"Strong is God, the fell foe of Lilith:*

*(Alas the hour!)*

*Nought in heaven or earth may affright Him;  
But join thou with me and we will smite Him.*

*"Strong is God, the great God of Eden:*

*(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*Over all He made He hath power;  
But lend me thou thy shape for an hour!*



*"Lend thy shape for the love of Lilith!*

*(Alas the hour!)*

*Look, my mouth and my cheek are ruddy,  
And thou art cold, and fire is my body.*

*"Lend thy shape for the hate of Adam!*

*(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*That he may wail my joy that forsook him,  
And curse the day when the bride-sleep took him.*

*"Lend thy shape for the shame of Eden!*

*(Alas the hour!)*

*Is not the foe-God weak as the foeman  
When love grows hate in the heart of a woman?*

*"Wouldst thou know the heart's hope of Lilith?*

*(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*Then bring thou close thine head till it glisten  
Along my breast, and lip me and listen.*

*"Am I sweet, O sweet Snake of Eden?*

*(Alas the hour!)*

*Then ope thine ear to my warm mouth's cooing  
And learn what deed remains for our doing.*

*"Thou didst hear when God said to Adam:—*

*(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*'Of all this wealth I have made thee warden;  
Thou'rt free to eat of the trees of the garden:*

*"Only of one tree eat not in Eden;*

*(Alas the hour!)*

*All save one I give to thy freewill,—  
The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.'*

*"O my love, come nearer to Lilith!*

*(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*In thy sweet folds bind me and bend me,  
And let me feel the shape thou shalt lend me!*

*"In thy shape I'll go back to Eden;  
(Alas the hour!)  
In these coils that Tree will I grapple,  
And stretch this crowned head forth by the apple.*

*"Lo, Eve bends to the breath of Lilitb!  
(Sing Eden Bower!)  
O how then shall my heart desire  
All her blood as food to its fire!*

*"Lo, Eve bends to the words of Lilitb! —  
(Alas the hour!)  
'Nay, this Tree's fruit,—why should ye hate it,  
Or Death be born the day that ye ate it?*

*"'Nay, but on that great day in Eden,  
(Sing Eden Bower!)  
By the help that in this wise Tree is,  
God knows well ye shall be as He is.'*

*"Then Eve shall eat and give unto Adam;  
(Alas the hour!)  
And then they both shall know they are naked,  
And their hearts ache as my heart hath achèd.*

*"Ay, let them hide 'mid the trees of Eden,  
(Sing Eden Bower!)  
As in the cool of the day in the garden  
God shall walk without pity or pardon.*

*"Hear, thou Eve, the man's heart in Adam!  
(Alas the hour!)  
Of his brave words bark to the bravest:—  
'This the woman gave that thou gavest.'*

*"Hear Eve speak, yea list to her, Lilitb!  
(Sing Eden Bower!)  
Feast thine heart with words that shall sate it—  
'This the serpent gave and I ate it.'*

*"O proud Eve, cling close to thine Adam,  
(Alas the hour!)  
Driven forth as the beasts of his naming  
By the sword that for ever is flaming.*

*"Know, thy path is known unto Lilith!  
(Sing Eden Bower!)  
While the blithe birds sang at thy wedding,  
There her tears grew thorns for thy treading.*

*"O my love, thou Love-snake of Eden!  
(Alas the hour!)  
O to-day and the day to come after!  
Loose me, love,—give breath to my laughter.*

*"O bright Snake, the Death-worm of Adam!  
(Sing Eden Bower!)  
Wreathe thy neck with my hair's bright tether,  
And wear my gold and thy gold together!*

*"On that day on the skirts of Eden,  
(Alas the hour!)  
In thy shape shall I glide back to thee,  
And in my shape for an instant view thee.*

*"But when thou'rt thou and Lilith is Lilith,  
(Sing Eden Bower!)  
In what bliss past hearing or seeing  
Shall each one drink of the other's being!*

*"With cries of 'Eve!' and 'Eden!' and 'Adam!'  
(Alas the hour!)  
How shall we mingle our love's caresses,  
I in thy coils, and thou in my tresses!*

*"With those names, ye echoes of Eden,  
(Sing Eden Bower!)  
Fire shall cry from my heart that burneth,—  
'Dust he is and to dust returneth!'*



*"Yet to-day, thou master of Lilith,—  
(Alas the hour!)*

*Wrap me round in the form I'll borrow  
And let me tell thee of sweet to-morrow.*

*"In the planted garden eastward in Eden,  
(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*Where the river goes forth to water the garden,  
The springs shall dry and the soil shall harden.*

*"Yea, where the bride-sleep fell upon Adam,  
(Alas the hour!)*

*None shall bear when the storm-wind whistles  
Through roses choked among thorns and thistles.*

*"Yea, beside the east-gate of Eden,  
(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*Where God joined them and none might sever,  
The sword turns this way and that for ever.*

*"What of Adam cast out of Eden?  
(Alas the hour!)*

*Lo! with care like a shadow shaken,  
He tills the hard earth whence he was taken.*

*"What of Eve too, cast out of Eden?  
(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*Nay, but she, the bride of God's giving,  
Must yet be mother of all men living.*

*"Lo, God's grace, by the grace of Lilith!  
(Alas the hour!)*

*To Eve's womb, from our sweet to-morrow,  
God shall greatly multiply sorrow.*

*"Fold me fast, O God-snake of Eden!  
(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*What more prize than love to impel thee?  
Grip and lip my limbs as I tell thee!*

*"Lo! two babes for Eve and for Adam!*

*(Alas the hour!)*

*Lo! sweet Snake, the travail and treasure, —*

*Two men-children born for their pleasure!*

*"The first is Cain and the second Abel:*

*(Sing Eden Bower!)*

*The soul of one shall be made thy brother,*

*And thy tongue shall lap the blood of the other."*

*(Alas the hour!)*

## SUDDEN LIGHT.

I HAVE been here before,  
But when or how I cannot tell :  
I know the grass beyond the door,  
The sweet keen smell,  
The sigbing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before,—  
How long ago I may not know :  
But just when at that swallow's soar  
Your neck turned so,  
Some veil did fall,—I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before ?  
And shall not thus time's eddying flight  
Still with our lives our love restore  
In death's despite,  
And day and night yield one delight once more ?



A LITTLE WHILE.

**A** *LITTLE while a little love*  
The hour yet bears for thee and me  
Who have not drawn the veil to see  
If still our heaven be lit above.  
Thou merely, at the day's last sigh,  
Hast felt thy soul prolong the tone;  
And I have heard the night-wind cry  
And deemed its speech mine own.

*A little while a little love*  
The scattering autumn boards for us  
Whose bower is not yet ruinous  
Nor quite unleaved our songless grove.  
Only across the shaken boughs  
We hear the flood-tides seek the sea,  
And deep in both our hearts they rouse  
One wail for thee and me.

*A little while a little love*  
May yet be ours who have not said  
The word it makes our eyes afraid  
To know that each is thinking of.  
Not yet the end: be our lips dumb  
In smiles a little season yet:  
I'll tell thee, when the end is come,  
How we may best forget.

LOVE-LILY.

**B**ETWEEN the hands, between the brows,  
Between the lips of Love-Lily,  
A spirit is born whose birth endows  
My blood with fire to burn through me ;  
Who breathes upon my gazing eyes,  
Who laughs and murmurs in mine ear,  
At whose least touch my colour flies,  
And whom my life grows faint to hear.

Within the voice, within the heart,  
Within the mind of Love-Lily,  
A spirit is born who lifts apart  
His tremulous wings and looks at me ;  
Who on my mouth his finger lays,  
And shows, while whispering lutes confer,  
That Eden of Love's watered ways  
Whose winds and spirits worship her.

Brows, hands, and lips, heart, mind, and voice,  
Kisses and words of Love-Lily,—  
Oh! bid me with your joy rejoice  
Till riotous longing rest in me!  
Ah! let not hope be still distraught,  
But find in her its gracious goal,  
Whose speech Truth knows not from her thought  
Nor Love her body from her soul.

FIRST LOVE REMEMBERED.

**P**EACE in her chamber, wheresoe'er  
It be, a holy place :  
The thought still brings my soul such grace  
As morning meadows wear.

Whether it still be small and light,  
A maid's who dreams alone,  
As from her orchard-gate the moon  
Its ceiling showed at night :

Or whether, in a shadow dense  
As nuptial hymns invoke,  
Innocent maidenhood awoke  
To married innocence :

There still the thanks unheard await  
The unconscious gift bequeathed ;  
For there my soul this hour has breathed  
An air inviolate.



## THE SONG OF THE BOWER.

SAY, is it day, is it dusk in thy bower,  
Thou whom I long for, who longest for me?  
Oh! be it light, be it night, 'tis Love's hour,  
Love's that is fettered as Love's that is free.  
Free Love has leaped to that innermost chamber,  
Oh! the last time, and the hundred before:  
Fettered Love, motionless, can but remember,  
Yet something that sighs from him passes the door.

Nay, but my heart when it flies to thy bower,  
What does it find there that knows it again?  
There it must droop like a shower-beaten flower,  
Red at the rent core and dark with the rain.  
Ah! yet what shelter is still shed above it,—  
What waters still image its leaves torn apart?  
Thy soul is the shade that clings round it to love it,  
And tears are its mirror deep down in thy heart.

What were my prize, could I enter thy bower,  
This day, to-morrow, at eve or at morn?  
Large lovely arms and a neck like a tower,  
Bosom then heaving that now lies forlorn.  
Kindled with love-breath, (the sun's kiss is colder!)  
Thy sweetness all near me, so distant to-day;  
My hand round thy neck and thy hand on my shoulder,  
My mouth to thy mouth as the world melts away.

What is it keeps me afar from thy bower,—  
My spirit, my body, so fain to be there?  
Waters engulfing or fires that devour?—  
Earth heaped against me or death in the air?  
Nay, but in day-dreams, for terror, for pity,  
The trees wave their heads with an omen to tell;  
Nay, but in night-dreams, throughout the dark city,  
The hours, clashed together, lose count in the bell.

Shall I not one day remember thy bower,  
One day when all days are one day to me?—  
Thinking, "I stirred not, and yet had the power!"—  
Yearning, "Ah God, if again it might be!"  
Peace, peace! such a small lamp illumines, on this highway,  
So dimly so few steps in front of my feet,—  
Yet shows me that her way is parted from my way. . . .  
Out of sight, beyond light, at what goal may we meet?

PENUMBRA.

I DID not look upon her eyes,  
(Though scarcely seen, with no surprise,  
'Mid many eyes a single look,)  
Because they should not gaze rebuke,  
At night, from stars in sky and brook.

I did not take her by the hand,  
(Though little was to understand  
From touch of hand all friends might take,)  
Because it should not prove a flake  
Burnt in my palm to boil and ache.

I did not listen to her voice,  
(Though none had noted, where at choice  
All might rejoice in listening,)  
Because no such a thing should cling  
In the wood's moan at evening.

I did not cross her shadow once,  
(Though from the hollow west the sun's  
Last shadow runs along so far,)  
Because in June it should not bar  
My ways, at noon when fevers are.

They told me she was sad that day,  
(Though wherefore tell what love's soothsay,  
Sooner than they, did register ?)  
And my heart leapt and wept to her,  
And yet I did not speak nor stir.

So shall the tongues of the sea's foam  
(Though many voices therewith come  
From drowned hope's home to cry to me,)  
Bewail one hour the more, when sea  
And wind are one with memory.



## THE WOODSPURGE.

**T**HE wind flapped loose, the wind was still,  
Shaken out dead from tree and bill:  
I had walked on at the wind's will,—  
I sat now, for the wind was still.

Between my knees my forehead was,—  
My lips, drawn in, said not *Alas!*  
My hair was over in the grass,  
My naked ears heard the day pass.

My eyes, wide open, had the run  
Of some ten weeds to fix upon;  
Among those few, out of the sun,  
The woodspurge flowered, three cups in one.

From perfect grief there need not be  
Wisdom or even memory:  
One thing then learnt remains to me,—  
The woodspurge has a cup of three.

## THE SEA-LIMITS.

**C**ONSIDER the sea's listless chime :  
Time's self it is, made audible,—  
The murmur of the earth's own shell.  
Secret continuance sublime  
Is the sea's end : our sight may pass  
No furlong further. Since time was,  
This sound hath told the lapse of time.

No quiet, which is death's,—it hath  
The mournfulness of ancient life,  
Enduring always at dull strife.  
As the world's heart of rest and wrath,  
Its painful pulse is in the sands.  
Last utterly, the whole sky stands,  
Gray and not known, along its path.

Listen alone beside the sea,  
Listen alone among the woods ;  
Those voices of twin solitudes  
Shall have one sound alike to thee :  
Hark where the murmurs of thronged men  
Surge and sink back and surge again,—  
Still the one voice of wave and tree.

Gather a shell from the strown beach  
And listen at its lips : they sigh  
The same desire and mystery,  
The echo of the whole sea's speech.  
And all mankind is thus at heart  
Not anything but what thou art :  
And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each.





## NOTES

NOTES



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In a recent number of *Poet-Lore* (January, 1895) appeared an article by Professor William G. Kingsland of London: "*Rossetti's 'Jenny.' With extracts from an hitherto unpublished version of the poem.*"

By the courtesy of the editors of this scholarly little magazine, these extracts are here included for the first time in any edition of *Rossetti's poems*.

1 In the manuscript version two mottoes are appended: "*An harlot is accounted as spittle,*" (*'Ecclesiasticus'*); and Shelley's transcript from Goethe:—

*"What still here!*

*In this enlightened age, too, since you have been  
Proved not to exist."*

2 The poem opens with the two lines as in the printed text, and then we read:

"Chooser of the oft-chosen part,  
With the old step by the old art  
Treading in the trodden way;  
Blossom of the eternal May  
Plucked and fouled and trampled on  
Stemless, scentless, strengthless, gone."

3 The next passage somewhat resembles the sixth section of the published poem—

"Or haply, were the truth confest  
Thou'rt thankful for a little rest?  
From the crush to rest within,  
And from the sickness and from the din  
Of woman's envious mocking, which  
Mocks thee because thy gown is rich;  
And from the wise unchildish elf,  
Of schoolmate lesser than himself



## NOTES.

Asking, the while thou glid'st apart,  
Whether he knows what thing thou art,  
And then in whispers wickedly  
Teaching him lust and vice by thee.

But most from the beastliness of man,  
Who spares not to end what he began,  
Whose acts are foul and his speech hard,  
Who having used thee, afterward  
Thrusts thee aside, as when I dine  
I serve the platter and the wine:  
*Thou being all men's, yet no man thine."*

4 Compare the tenth section of 'Jenny' as printed, with the MS. reading:

"Or else it may be that thou hast  
A thought in thee of what is past,  
Of the old time which seems to thee  
Much older than any history  
That is written in any book;  
When thou would'st lie in the fields, and look  
Along the ground through the thick grass,  
Wondering where the city was  
Of whose loud gaudy broil and bale  
They told thee then for a child's tale.  
I think it may be that the press  
Of the exceeding silentness  
Weigheth on thee, letting thee hear  
Thy mother's voice, that brings strange fear,  
Talk to thee, as it used to talk:  
I think that on the lighted walk  
Even, and through folly's bauble-chimes  
That voice findeth thee many times."

5 Toward the end of the MS. these lines occur:—

"Jenny mine, how dar'st thou be  
In the nineteenth century?  
Now when the naked Human Mind  
Laughs backward at the years behind,  
And though the goal seem to be won  
Still girds his loins that he may run;

## NOTES.

When the rind peels from the fruit beneath ;  
When the sword wears away the sheath ;  
When the Temple-veil is rent in twain ;  
When through the husk pierces the grain ; —  
Through sense and flesh still struggling out,  
Till wrong shall cease, and pain and doubt,  
And perfect Man be mind throughout.  
In this great day how darest thou stay,  
Thou whom the daylight drives away?  
Thou stumbling-stone of argument !”

6 The MS. closes with the image used in the twenty-sixth section of the printed text :—

‘ Like a toad within a stone  
Seated while Time crumbles on.’

Readers familiar with Lecky’s ‘*History of European Morals*’ will not forget the great peroration wherein this thought of Rossetti’s is re-stated by the historian in impassioned and imperishable prose.

**U**NDER the arch of Life, where love and death,  
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw  
Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze struck awe,  
I drew it in as simply as my breath.  
Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,  
The sky and sea bend on thee,—which can draw,  
By sea or sky or woman, to one law,  
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.

This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise  
Thy voice and hand shake still,—long known to thee  
By flying hair and fluttering hem,—the beat  
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,  
How passionately and irretrievably,  
In what fond flight, how many ways and days!

THE HOUSE OF LIFE.

(Sonnet lxxvii.)

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Under the arch of life, where love and death,  
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I sat  
Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze sternly  
I knew it in its simplicity as my death.  
There are the eyes which, once and bravely,  
The sky and sea bend on their—white and blue,  
By sea or sky or woman, to one face  
The allotted homeward of her pains and tears.

This is that lady beauty, in whose prime  
The roses and band shake still,—long known to the  
Her flowing hair and smiling face—the face  
Following her hills of the heart and fate,  
Her passion and her mystery,  
In what (oh! light, how many eyes and hearts)

THE HOUSE OF LIFE

BY ALFRED DOUGLAS

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